

## Meeting Note

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<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>Wales Water Management Forum</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Virtual via MS Teams</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	15/03/2023
<b>Attendees present:</b>	Steve Ormerod (chair), Ceri Jones (NRW), Sian Williams (NRW), Laura Moss (DWI), Mark Charlesworth (NRW), Richard Blackwell (WRW for United Utilities), Natalie Hall (NRW), Adriana Kiss (WG), Dennis Matheson (TFA Cymru), Bob Gilchrist (CCW), Gail Davies (Affonyd Cymru), Elizabeth Franks (HD Cymru), Phil Stone (Canoe Wales), Tony Harrington (DCWW), Helen Haider (NRW), Rachel Lewis-Davies (NFU Cymru), Fergus O'Brien (DCWW), Thomaz Andrade (WG)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Ceri Davies (NRW), Fraser McAuley (CLA), Andy Morrith (Coal Authority), Anthony Geddes (Confor)
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Ceri Jones

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### Item 1 Open meeting

As Chair, Professor Steve Ormerod opened the meeting setting out logistics for holding the virtual Forum.

### Item 2 Review minutes and action log

Agreed meeting notes and actions from the last meeting.

**ACTION CARRIED OVER: CJ to check with WG to check Water Strategy and value of water work in relation to STT**

A final version of the October 2022 meeting notes will be made available on the NRW website page for WWMF <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/water/wales-water-management-forum/?lang=en>

## Item 3 Member's contributions and Update paper – highlights and open discussion

WWMF had an open discussion on matters relevant to the forum, RB started the session on the Water Resources West (WRW) work.

The WRW Draft Regional Plan consultation ran from November 2022 to February 2023. The Statement of Response to that consultation will be published June 2023, with the final Regional Plan published Autumn 2023. Decision making is linked to SMNR

Questions were asked about involvement of DCWW and HD including consistency of plans between water companies in relation to demand management/ reductions. Points raised on the distribution of demand, differences between rural and urban demand and future household consumption alongside Climate Change. Challenge to do more to reduce pressure of demand from Welsh waters. Also point raised about tenants and the work that ADAS had undertaken. Comment also raised about the Slurry Separator Project and how this will also contribute to reduce demand. Many of the points discussed here were submitted as part of the consultation.

**ACTION: Can WG and NRW share their consultation responses to the draft Regional Plan?**

**ACTION: DM to share link for ADAS report relating to tenant landowners**

Discussion then focused on the Update paper. Points to note included:

- **NRW/WG Capital Fund** – Projects are on track and to budget, progress has been shared with Welsh Government. From April the programme is looking to expand the water quality projects.
- **Bathing waters-** CJ provided a further update 'Wales' Programme for Government makes a commitment to "Begin to designate Wales' inland waters for recreation, strengthening water quality monitoring". Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is committed to supporting delivery of this ambition and during 2022 established a project funded via a Welsh Government grant letter.

During 2022-23 the NRW project lead has focussed on stakeholder engagement to inform project aims and approach. This includes, improving understanding of stakeholder perceptions of the existing framework for Bathing Water designation, barriers to applications, and landowner concerns. The aim is to identify a small number of sites, across Wales, to run a pilot bathing season in 2023. The pilot bathing season will allow for organisations, including local authorities, who have not previously conducted a bathing season to work through resourcing and understanding the duties, and allow for water quality monitoring to be undertaken. The pilot season will inform recommendations to update and improve the framework for managing Bathing Waters, including identifying any requirements to amend the legislation and guidance. We are currently discussing seven potential sites for the pilot, including a number of reservoirs, standing waters and rivers.'

Interest in inland bathing waters and comments raised that the work should consider the wider recreation users and not just swimmers. WWMF were interested to know if

we are looking to improve water quality for bathing or improve water quality more widely and bathers can benefit from these improvements. The initial focus is on 'bathing water' and using the Bathing Water Regulations and how these can apply to inland waters. There are other drivers to improve and protect water quality as a whole through various policies and plans including the River Basin Management Plans. Currently this programme is at the pilot stage, assessments will be bacteriological.

**ACTION: CJ share list of pilot sites and details of the working group**

- **River Basin Management Plans** – Interest to hear early thinking on a '4<sup>th</sup> Cycle' in particular for water company work which has been focused on three complete cycles as set out in current retained Legislation. Opportunities and efficiencies do need to be looked at, both WG and NRW are having early discussions to explore these.
- **Nutrient Review** – Request to share technical papers and if trends have been looked at backwards.

**ACTION: CJ confirm if NRW can share the methodology and technical reports, also current and predicted trends for back casting.**

- **WG Summit for the SAC programme** – SW provided feedback from last week's session. There is a lot of work happening including governance for the groups and systems in place by end March 2023. Expecting an update to the Action Plan. Some discussion in relation to this work and the governance work KPMG are undertaking, the KPMG work covers the wider water programme. NFU Cymru were also at the meeting last week and also acknowledged the amount of work happening here. Governance and communication important for this work.

**NRW Corporate Plan**

CJ shared an update provided by Sue Ginley who had attended the previous WWMF.

'We'd like to thank members of the forum for providing feedback to us via our survey held just before Christmas. We received over 80 responses from external partners and more from staff – and we have read through and considered every single comment we were sent. We have used this valuable feedback to inform our near final version of the corporate plan.

Our next steps are to take the final version to our Board at the end of March for sign off and plan to publish in early April. We are also working on our performance framework for the Corporate Plan so we can measure our progress and outcomes, alongside a balanced scorecard which will monitor our day-to-day delivery and how well our organisation is operating.

Thank you again for helping us with this – and we look forward to working with you in the future to help address the nature and climate emergencies and minimise pollution.'

**Terms of Reference (ToR)**

The ToR are considered every two years. Reference was made to an ongoing review of wider governance and ToR, notably the work KPMG are undertaking. The ToR for this group has been shared as part of that wider Wales review.

Point made that the ToR should include 'outcomes'.

**ACTION: CJ to work with NH as part of the ongoing reviews and feedback at the next session. Also consider 'outcomes' for WWMF.**

### **England and Wales River Quality update**

SO presented the work being undertaken as part of the England and Wales river quality work, a written paper will be published, and this will be shared once available.

### **River clean on the Teifi**

PS shared some of the photos and experiences from a recent river clean along the Teifi. This was undertaken over 3 weekends and involved 130/140 volunteers along the riverbanks and in the river. The main materials collected were silage bags, wrap and netting, so mainly plastics.

This prompted a wider discussion on the availability of places to dispose/ recycle this type of material generated by the agriculture community. In particular with an increased use in plastic within farming and wider society. It was agreed that plastics would be included in the forward look and there could be some join up across the Forum to tackle the issue.

**ACTION: CJ to circulate company names suggested by DM**

### **Forward look for WWMF:**

- a) Plastics
- b) Emerging Trends to water quality
- c) Groundwater trends
- d) Water monitoring

### **Field Trip – 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

**ACTION: WWMF to confirm availability for the day so CJ can plan logistics and confirm arrangements ASAP**

## **Item 4 NRW's approach to Citizen Science – Morag Taite, NRW**

Morag Taite (NRW) gave a presentation on NRW's approach to Citizen Science (CS). The approach covers all areas of CS including terrestrial, marine and river systems and contributes to a number of working groups.

There are challenges with CS including staff time and resources, the integration of data from multiple sources, the intended use of the data in particular for regulatory purposes, and interpretation.

The importance of training, quality assurance, interpretation and overall professionalism was discussed, this is incredibly important if this data is used to inform policy.

Guidance is available and useful weblinks were provided:

**Check the project is suitable for a citizen science approach**

[sepa\\_choosingandusingcitizenscience\\_interactive\\_4web\\_final\\_amended-blue1.pdf \(ceh.ac.uk\)](#)

**General guidance on setting up and delivering citizen science projects**

[Citizen Science resources — UKEOF](#)

The development of the work was discussed including the CaSTCo (Catchment Systems Thinking Co-operative) and the 8 pilot catchments.

The focus is to deliver an agreed framework/approach for people to monitor their rivers and catchments, to train and resource citizen scientists and local communities to carry out monitoring and collection of high-density data, work will be complemented by sensors and hi-tech monitoring.

The session was welcome by WWMF. With the work undertaken to date it was recommended that NRW acknowledge/ provide a response to work that has been undertaken locally to date.

**ACTION: Gail Davies and Sue Bryne to get together to look at the Position Statement**

How this work relates to the farming community was discussed. Following the meeting the following link was shared which may be of interest to WWMF.

[UKEOF symposium: Farmers, citizen science & environmental monitoring - YouTube](#)

DCWW have made available a fund through the IEAP which can be accessed through the Rivers Trusts as a further contribution to the CS work.

Access, in particular to private land, was discussed and the need to gain landownership permissions together with how data is shared. The question of transparency was also raised. These matters need to be clearly set out at the start of the CS project, the British Trust for Ornithology was given as a good example of a successful and long terms CS programme.

The importance of a data platform was flagged including accessibility and application of this data.

The feedback was welcomed by NRW.

## **Item 5 Pharmaceuticals – Thomaz Andrade, WG**

TA presented the work addressing pharmaceuticals pollution in water. This included the current policy context and substances or issues. NRWs existing passive sampling programme was discussed with the interim results, this provides a rich source of information. EU proposals and anti- microbial resistance was covered leading on to Welsh

Governments approach and working with wider stakeholders notably the health sector including Public Health Wales.

In terms of the monitoring programme the Forum were interested in the locations and selection of sites and how datasets can be joined up.

This is a subject that would be useful to return to to continue the discussion and pick up on other chemicals work and has been included in the forward look for the October session.

## **Item 6 AOB**

- CJ flagged the current consultation on the Flood Risk Management Plans which will run to 24 May 2023. WWMF were encouraged to look at the consultation and provide their feedback

[Flood Risk Management Plan for Wales - Natural Resources Wales Citizen Space - Citizen Space \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](https://www.naturalresources.wales/citizen-space/cyfoethnaturiol.cymru)

## **Item 7 Date of next meeting**

**26 October 2023, diary date has been sent out**